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Annual report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund to the Economic and Social Council

Note by the Secretariat

1. In its decision 2003/1, the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund requested the Executive Director of the Fund to transmit the annual report of the Executive Director to the Economic and Social Council (E/ICEF/2003/4 (Part I)), together with the comments on the report made by the Board at its first regular session, to the Council for consideration at its substantive session of 2003.

2. The report is reproduced in part one below, while the summary of deliberations of the Board on the report is set out in part two.

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Part one
Annual report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund to the Economic and Social Council*

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* Originally issued as document E/ICEF/2003/4 (Part I).

I. Implementation of the reform programme of the Secretary-General and the provisions of the triennial comprehensive policy review

1. This report takes into account Executive Board decision 1999/6 (E/ICEF/1996/12/Rev.1) on elements for inclusion in Part II of the Executive Director's annual report as well as comments made by Board members at the first and second regular sessions of 2002. It responds to specific issues addressed in General Assembly resolution 56/201 of 21 December 2001 on the triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and to guidance provided by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2002/29 on progress on the implementation of resolution 56/201. The report was prepared in accordance with a format agreed jointly by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme and UNICEF, with each agency emphasizing issues of particular relevance to its mandate and Board's instructions.

A. Funding for operational activities for development of the United Nations system

2. UNICEF held its third pledging event in the context of the multi-year funding framework during the first regular session of the Executive Board in 2002. Within an overall objective of increasing core resources and enhancing their predictability, the event achieved notable results. Of 184 countries encouraged to pledge, 51 countries did so (down from 66 in 2001), of whom 20 were donors (eight fewer than in 2001) and 31 were programme countries (seven fewer than in 2001). Nine of the top 10 major donors made pledges, with Denmark unable to do so at that time due to changes in its budgetary process.

3. The total amount pledged was $324.9 million, a decrease of $18.8 million (5 per cent) from 2001. Had Denmark pledged the amount it subsequently provided in September, the total would have been $346.2 million, an increase of $2.5 million over 2001. Of the 51 countries pledging, 38 increased or maintained their levels of the previous year; of these, 11 increased their pledges by 7 per cent or more. The same number as last year, 15, gave a payment schedule.

4. The number of multi-year pledges decreased to eight, compared to 30 in 2001. The cumulative amount of future-year pledges decreased from $199 million to $111 million. It is considered that this reduction is due to government administrative restrictions which preclude the announcement of multi-year pledges rather than a trend towards reduced support.

5. Regular resources support from high-income countries decreased by $19.1 million but the group contributed 98.7 per cent of the total amount pledged, compared to 98.8 per cent in 2001. Regular resources contributions from middle-income countries increased by $0.5 million and the group contributed 1.1 per cent of the total amount pledged, compared to 0.9 per cent in 2001. Regular resources support from low-income countries decreased by $0.2 million, with the group contributing 0.2 per cent of the total amount pledged, compared to 0.3 per cent in 2001. Thus, burden-sharing did not shift significantly between high-, middle- and low-income groups and overall there remains scope for increased support from the

middle-income group. The burden-sharing within the high-income group did improve, with the eight donors ranking below the top 10 donors increasing their contribution, while only six of the top 10 donors did so.

6. As of end-September 2002, UNICEF had collected $298.2 million in cash from Governments for regular resources income in 2002. UNICEF estimates that annual regular resources income from Governments will be $367 million against the medium-term plan forecast of $360 million. This represents an increase of 2 per cent against the medium-term plan and 4.6 per cent against actual 2001 regular resources income from Governments.

7. Achieving the goals of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan (MTSP), as well as the organization's support for Governments and other stakeholders in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the goals of *A World Fit for Children* (A/S-27/19/Rev.1) will require that all Member States contribute to UNICEF core resources, within their ability to do so. UNICEF therefore encourages all Member States to increase their annual voluntary contributions to regular resources and for those in a position to do so to provide multi-year commitments and payment schedules at the pledging event held at the first regular session of the Executive Board. Additionally, Member States from high- and middle-income countries are encouraged to contribute to UNICEF core resources commensurate with their capacities, to avoid increasing overdependence on a limited number of donors.

B. Capacity-building

8. Capacity-building is a central element of the UNICEF country programme approach, with an emphasis on national execution using the cash assistance modality. This work is now guided by the five organizational priorities of the MTSP, which includes specific capacity-building strategies in relation to each of the priorities. To support the targets of immunization "plus", for example, UNICEF is working with other United Nations partners to translate general guidance into specific capacity-building directives to take advantage of the mechanisms of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization and country-level planning for immunization programmes.

9. UNICEF also continues to refine more generic programme processes and supporting tools. In 2002, a newly revised Programme Policy and Procedure Manual strengthened guidance on a child-rights-based approach to programming. The UNICEF-assisted situation analysis is becoming a major contribution to national research and knowledge and to country-level data systems related to the realization of children's and women's rights. UNICEF support to countries for data collection for standard global indicators on children's rights through the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) has resulted in many countries in the filling of key data gaps at the national level. As part of the review of progress for the Special Session on Children, 66 countries undertook MICS. This work also serves to strengthen national research capacities in relation to the Millennium Decade Goals and poverty analysis. It is typically carried out under the leadership of a national research institution, and involves discussion and agreement with the main programme partners on analysis of constraints to children's and women's rights.

10. UNICEF continues to refine processes and tools to maintain the focus on results in terms of capacities in programme implementation and monitoring. This

stronger results-based management focus includes current work on refining results-based tools for programme planning and monitoring and evaluation (the Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP)). UNICEF is also leading the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) task team on harmonization and simplification to develop a common approach and tools for planning in monitoring and evaluation. The combination of stronger results-based programme planning and monitoring and evaluation planning will contribute to a clearer definition of expected results and improved means to track and assess them.

C. Common Country Assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework

11. At its first regular session of 2002, the Executive Board approved a revised process for the preparation and approval of UNICEF country programmes of cooperation (decision 2002/4, (E/ICEF/2002/8)). This not only harmonized the UNICEF process with those followed by UNFPA and UNDP in terms of timing, process and major documentation, but ensured that the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) become integral parts of the three agencies' respective programming processes. A major impediment to realizing the full potential of the CCA and the UNDAF was thus largely removed.

12. The triennial policy review of 2001, supporting the lessons learned from the almost 100 CCAs and over 50 UNDAFs that had been produced by the end of 2001, guided revision of the CCA/UNDAF guidelines. The quality of both process and product, incorporating a strong focus on the Millennium Development Goals and ensuring effective linkages between the UNDAF and agencies' country programmes, were the main elements and concerns in the revision.

13. Revision of the guidelines involved a thorough review of lessons learned as well as systematic consultation with all partners from UNDG and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), and with donor and programme countries. The resulting integrated guidelines combine analysis, framework development, programming and monitoring and evaluation into one continuous, interlinked process. They are a significant improvement on previous guidance and are expected to contribute to "second generation" CCAs and UNDAFs that are significantly improved over many of the earlier ones. UNICEF maintains high-level membership in the UNDG working group on the guidelines, backed by a process of internal consultation. This has ensured a high level of ownership within UNICEF which facilitated internal assimilation of the guidelines.

14. The guidelines will be reviewed - and if necessary modified — in early 2003, on the basis of experience in their application in the "roll-out" countries for 2002 — Benin, Ecuador, Kenya, Niger and Pakistan. The release of the new guidelines was accompanied by a systematic process of support and guidance to the respective country teams involving the United Nations Development Group Office, the United Nations Staff College and the UNDG Training Group, under the overall coordination of the UNDG Programme Group. The importance of providing systematic support and quality assurance had been recognized as being vital if the shortcomings of earlier processes and products are to be avoided.

15. The roll-out process avoided many of shortcomings of earlier years owing to early notification by the UNDG Executive Committee members to United Nations country teams of their obligations to help countries produce high-quality CCAs and UNDAFs; the insistence on effective and early training/orientation for country team members; direct consultation with country teams; and clear communications by individual agencies to their respective field offices on the importance of effective agency participation in CCA/UNDAF processes as a prerequisite for development of country programmes. The UNDG Programme Group, chaired by UNICEF in 2002, has also monitored the process continuously while regional entities have assumed a more substantive support and oversight role than in the past. Compared to previous years, there was a much stronger appreciation at the level of country teams of the importance of the timely completion of high-quality UNDAFs as the basis for the development of country programmes.

16. In line with recommendations made in the triennial comprehensive policy review and in particular the external evaluation undertaken as part of that process, the UNDG Programme Group also created a Quality Support and Assurance System for the CCA/UNDAF process. This was done to ensure that country teams receive appropriate support as well as timely feedback on their products at various stages. The incorporation of such responsibilities into the accountability frameworks of headquarters and regional support structures, the creation of "virtual" support teams and the development of self-assessment tools for country teams ensures that quality support and assurance of CCA/UNDAF become an integral part of agencies' responsibilities and that these instruments are handled with the same rigour as the agencies' own processes. Within UNICEF, the CCA and UNDAF are now treated with the same regard as the situation analysis and the country programme preparation process. This commitment to the CCA and UNDAF as essential tools for UNICEF country programming was reflected in the guidance issued on the new country programme preparation process.

17. As regards existing UNDAFs, UNICEF already signalled in 2001 the need for country offices to ensure that linkages between the CCA/UNDAF and UNICEF country programmes were well developed and incorporated into documents presented to the Executive Board. The CCA and UNDAF processes were incorporated into the programming guidelines issued early in 2001. There was considerable improvement over previous years as regards the 11 country notes and country programme recommendations presented to the Executive Board in 2002 for countries with harmonized programme cycles. Clear linkages to UNDAFs were evident in many cases, as was the UNICEF contribution to the Millennium Development Goals. However, some countries continued to face difficulties because of delays in the completion of UNDAFs. The full impact of the adoption of the harmonized process for programme preparation and approval and the incorporation of the CCA and UNDAF into the UNDG Executive Committee agencies' programming processes will only be felt with the 2002 roll-out and the new format for country notes, to be presented to the Executive Board for the first time at the annual session of 2003.

18. Overall, a much stronger foundation is now in place to ensure timely completion of high-quality CCAs and UNDAFs in line with expectations for the next generation of these tools. Nevertheless, achieving the quality objectives outlined in the triennial comprehensive policy review and incorporated in the new guidelines remains a challenge, particularly for countries and United Nations country offices with limited capacities.

D. Monitoring and evaluation

19. In decision 2002/9 (E/ICEF/2002/8), the Executive Board endorsed the report on the evaluation function in the context of the MTSP (E/ICEF/2002/10) as a policy statement on the evaluation function of UNICEF. This "milestone" decision, representing the Board's first review of evaluation policy since 1992, reiterated the principles of universality and country-driven programming for UNICEF activities. It emphasized the importance of preserving the decentralized nature of the evaluation system, given the diversity of situations in different countries.

20. The Board encouraged UNICEF to collaborate with other members of the United Nations system on questions relating to the evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of operational activities for development. It requested that UNICEF enhance the independence of evaluation by making more extensive use of external evaluators, from both programme and donor countries, particularly from the country with its programme subject to evaluation. The Board welcomed the Executive Director's decision to publish all evaluation reports.

21. UNICEF is supporting programme countries in evaluating their own programmes and contributing to the strengthening of their evaluation capacities. UNICEF is expected to ensure the full participation of national authorities in the drafting of terms of reference, the development of methodologies and indicators and in the selection of teams in all evaluation exercises conducted at the country level.

22. At the level of the country programme, UNICEF has promoted the systematic use of the IMEP within the programme management cycle. The IMEP is the prerequisite to gathering key performance information necessary for subsequent evaluation of the country programme. The increasingly close collaboration with evaluators from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs is supporting the work of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly and has reaffirmed the leading position of UNICEF among United Nations agencies in terms of country-level evaluations.

23. To facilitate the review of evaluation findings and lessons learned, UNICEF has created a new database of evaluation reports and research studies. In 2002, UNICEF made this database easily accessible via its intranet to UNICEF staff, Governments and other interested parties.

24. While UNICEF has carried out joint evaluations with the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and with other United Nations agencies, these experiences have shown that additional work and experience are required to ensure compatibility of procedures and practices and responsiveness of all partners. At present, UNICEF is chairing a new inter-agency working group aimed at establishing more standardized United Nations norms and standards for evaluations.

25. UNICEF continues to play an active role in supporting the development of national and regional professional evaluation associations. The African Evaluation Association has been supported by the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office and as of June 2002, included 17 national evaluation associations. The development of evaluation associations has been similarly fostered in Latin America and South Asia.

E. Simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures

26. The simplification and harmonization of operational policies and procedures was one of the top priorities of the UNDG for 2002. In March, a Joint Inter-Agency Working Group was set up under the joint auspices of the Programme and Management Groups to review procedures for programme implementation, monitoring and reporting, and to make recommendations on ways to simplify and harmonize these procedures. Recognizing the possibility of eventual adoption by other UNDG and CEB members, the existing mechanisms of the Programme Group were used to keep the wider group informed of the work under way.

27. To ensure that all parts of the organization are aware of and are involved in the processes being developed, UNICEF has established reference groups at headquarters and in the field to ensure adequate consultation on key issues. The issue is incorporated into regular orientation and training activities for UNICEF staff at various levels and into the agendas of the regional and Global Management Teams.

28. As did other participating agencies, UNICEF sent a detailed questionnaire to all field offices to solicit initial views, ideas and inputs on a range of simplification and harmonization issues. The responses indicated a high level of interest in the issues being raised, with major concerns in the areas of simplification of documentation for programme planning and implementation, and issues of work overload generated by participation in the CCA and UNDAF processes.

29. The Joint Working Group identified 17 potential areas for simplification and harmonization, focusing on procedures for programme planning and implementation, and initiated the process of developing detailed proposals for possible new and/or harmonized tools and instruments. An implementation plan was submitted to the Economic and Social Council in July 2002.

30. At the request of UNDP, an ex officio member of OECD/DAC, UNICEF is participating in the DAC Task Force on Donor Practices with a view to harmonizing the reporting practices of OECD members, UNDG members and the World Bank. This exercise is closely linked to the ongoing efforts of UNDG to harmonize and simplify procedures and will ensure a better fit between national priorities and systems and donors' activities and reporting. The exercise will support national capacity development in a manner which leads to more common procedures among donors and greater use of host nations' systems and which allows for more effective communication among major stakeholders. By stressing a "best practices" approach, the harmonized and simplified procedures and practices will take into account the diversity of country situations.

31. The DAC Task Force has selected four countries for review of the "harmony" between the approaches used by OECD, UNDG and Governments — Bolivia, Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam. As both the UNDG and OECD/DAC initiatives aim to support national capacity development, there is a high degree of harmony between the principles used in both exercises. Thus, even though UNDG members already employ the CCA/UNDAF approaches, the evolving approach of OECD/DAC to "pre-implementation" practices procedures is in harmony with respect to the basic planning principles and approaches incorporated in the CCA and UNDAF.

32. A major meeting in December 2002 involving the DAC, UNDG members and the World will provide an opportunity to review areas of harmony and share reasons for any significant divergences. In many ways, and recognizing the differences in governance among the stakeholders, the UNDG initiative on harmonization and simplification is a more rigorous and demanding exercise. It is anticipated that the strengths of the UNDG exercise can be subsumed into a broader framework with full recognition of the multilateral character and national ownership and leadership associated with United Nations operational activities.

F. Resident coordinator system

33. Strengthening of the resident coordinator system continued in 2002 with the introduction of an improved assessment system. All candidates, including present and former resident coordinators, are now expected to undertake the assessment before being considered for future resident coordinator appointments. "Fine tuning", based on lessons learned, includes strengthening the competency-based interview for a better reflection of past experience in coordination and adapting the assessment to suit the situation of sitting resident coordinators. During 2002, 10 assessments were conducted with a total of 89 candidates, of whom 22 (one fourth of the total) were sitting resident coordinators; 47 (53 per cent) were from UNDP; 36 (40 per cent) were from other United Nations agencies; and six (7 per cent) were external candidates.

34. With respect to selection procedures, the Inter-Agency Advisory Panel has implemented revised policies and procedures emanating from the review conducted in September 2001. The Panel meets regularly, upcoming vacancies are announced well in advance and the consultation and clearance procedures within the United Nations system have been improved. Member States could further support the process by expediting clearance procedures for appointment of resident coordinators. The lead time involved in getting clearances from the host country remains often lengthy and in many cases is the major cause of vacancies.

35. Piloting of a "multi-rater" assessment of United Nations country teams, designed in 2001, was completed during 2002 in 10 countries. These country teams were assessed on core values, personal leadership, professional judgement and managing relations. The pilot has resulted in recommendations for mainstreaming the assessment of country team members within the human resource systems of the UNDG agencies and adapting the assessment to help strengthen country teams in special circumstances.

36. During the year, UNICEF nominated four senior staff members to undergo the competency assessment (two women and two men). Presently, four resident coordinators are UNICEF staff members (half of them women), with one woman in the pool awaiting assignment. The UNICEF Regional Director for South Asia was appointed the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan and the UNICEF Special Representative for the Balkans served as Humanitarian Coordinator for the first half of the year. In addition, in many complex country situations including Colombia, Jordan, Sri Lanka and the Sudan, UNICEF representatives have served as interim resident coordinators, helping to maintain continuity in the role of the United Nations system at critical times.

37. Addressing the gender gap among resident coordinators continues to be a challenge. The UNDG has urged all United Nations agencies to ensure that at least 50 per cent of the candidates they sponsor are women. When suitable female candidates are not available within the system, agencies are encouraged to sponsor external women with the right background and profile. Notwithstanding this, only 26 of the candidates assessed were women. The number of candidates with a background and experience in humanitarian response has increased. However, candidates with both a humanitarian background and development experience are rare and this has posed challenges, especially in chronic conflict or post-conflict situations.

38. The results of the multi-rater assessment indicate that, other things being equal, there is a sense of solidarity among members of the country team when they meet together at least once a month; have had to respond collectively to a humanitarian crisis; share common premises; and the resident coordinator is perceived to make a clear distinction between his/her responsibilities as resident coordinator and those as UNDP resident representative.

G. Humanitarian assistance

39. UNICEF programming and resource mobilization recognize that the phases of relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development generally are not consecutive but rather overlap and often occur simultaneously. UNICEF has a role and country presence before, during and after situations of national crisis. As such, the core of its work remains defined by the country programme of cooperation - negotiated with the national Government and approved by the Executive Board. UNICEF has adopted the principle of mainstreaming emergency programmes into the country programme process. This and the five organizational priorities of the MTSP guide all programmes, whether in stable or unstable situations. The development of each country programme is based on national policies and priorities and takes full account of available resources and organizational experience, the goals of the UNDAF and the expected contributions of United Nations, bilateral and international partners.

40. Financially, the number of donors responding to UNICEF appeals under the Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) has grown significantly. In 1997, emergency funding came from some 18 Governments and 16 National Committees for UNICEF, plus United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In 2002, 33 Governments supported emergency appeals, along with 31 National Committees and seven other donors. Of emergency contributions pledged and indications of pledges as of end-November 2002, 87 per cent were from Governments and 13 per cent from non-governmental and other sources.

41. Early and flexible funding at the start of an emergency, or early in the year for Consolidated Appeals, increases the efficiency of the delivery of UNICEF assistance. A number of donors, including Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden, are supporting UNICEF with early and flexible funding for the Consolidated Appeals.

H. Gender

42. The strong links between women's and children's rights were reaffirmed in *A World Fit for Children* and have allowed gender to become a significant entry point

for programme and advocacy activities to benefit children. The cross-cutting gender perspective in the MTSP was strengthened by checklists of strategic gender issues for each of the five priority areas.

43. As a key strategy to promote gender-focused planning and to complement ongoing efforts to strengthen the gender dimension in future CCAs and UNDAFs, UNICEF continued to promote the increased availability of gender-disaggregated data through surveys (including MICS) and other information collection tools.

44. A revision of UNICEF internal guidelines for participation in the CAP ensured that the gender aspect was strengthened and emphasized as a cross-cutting issue in crisis situations. As a Co-Chair of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Reference Group on Gender, UNICEF has played an active role in revising the inter-agency CAP training materials and led the process of developing and testing a module on capacity and vulnerability analysis as part of these materials. The IASC Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse has developed a plan of action on prevention and response mechanisms to address sexual abuse and exploitation in humanitarian crises. UNICEF is involved in developing training and awareness materials for staff and beneficiaries, which will use a gender-equality and child-rights perspective to address sexual exploitation and abuse during humanitarian crises.

45. In the fight against HIV/AIDS, gender dimensions have proven to be both central and very challenging since young women and girls are now recognized as being the groups most vulnerable to HIV infection in many countries. UNICEF offices increasingly are promoting the gender dimension of efforts to combat HIV/AIDS. In collaboration with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, UNICEF is working with the International Center for Research on Women in three pilot countries to develop and promote gender-sensitive strategies, involving working with parents and guardians, to reduce the vulnerability of young women and girls to HIV.

46. UNICEF continues its commitment to leadership in, and acceleration of, the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, a 10-year programme launched by the Secretary-General that builds on the Education for All (EFA) movement to support girls' education and eliminate the gender gap and bias. With all other Millennium Development Goals targeted on 2015, the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 will represent a first challenge for the achievement of the Millennium Goals. A substantial element of success will serve to reaffirm the targets and commitments taken on by all world leaders in 2000. Failure to meet the challenge could cast efforts to attain the more distant goals in a less positive mood, in addition to condemning another generation of children, and mainly girls, to a life of ignorance, poverty and misery. The acceleration of efforts in a system-wide initiative will focus on intensive interventions in 25 selected countries. Girls' education is being identified as a United Nations system priority in such relevant other initiatives as the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development.

I. Cooperation with the World Bank

47. UNICEF continues to expand and deepen its partnerships with the Bretton Woods institutions, particularly the World Bank. This relationship has been pursued through regular policy and operational meetings between the World Bank and UNICEF

at headquarters and country levels. As poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) evolve, consultations increasingly have centred on operational and implementation issues, including the development of the social sector components of the PRSP, making it compatible with the rights approach and monitoring of performance.

48. Improving service delivery, the theme of the World Development Report 2003, was the subject of the most recent UNICEF-World Bank consultation. At the annual consultation with the Human Development Network of the World Bank, held in May 2002, the two organizations shared their strategic frameworks, focusing on matching of priorities and defining how a more strategic cooperation can be developed within shared priorities and programmatic frameworks, including the Millennium Development Goals, the PRSP, CCA/UNDAF and the UNICEF MTSP. All agreed that the Millennium Development Goals will serve as a common framework that will help to focus and streamline future cooperation.

49. In the past year, UNICEF participated in the regional and global review of PRSPs initiated by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. UNICEF also collaborated with the Bank and the World Health Organization (WHO) in conducting two regional workshops in Africa, which has the highest number of PRSPs. The workshops, attended by government officials from over 40 countries and the agencies' staff, focused on the health and nutrition components of PRSPs and sector wide approaches (SWAps). The agencies held additional meetings during the year to discuss strategies for monitoring, especially the need for harmonizing the monitoring of such specific indicators as under-five mortality rate. The meetings benefited from UNICEF experience in monitoring the indicators of the World Summit for Children, and set the course for future consultations by establishing a reference group for monitoring and evaluation of malaria targets and an action plan for monitoring nutritional indicators. The United States Agency for International Development and WHO also contributed to these discussions. In November 2001, United Nations country teams received guidance notes on the role of United Nations agencies in the PRSP. The notes, signed by agency heads, outlined the strategies for promotion of children's and women's issues and examples of collaborative activities.

50. Collaboration on SWAps is facilitated by the Inter-agency Group on SWAps, of which both UNICEF and the World Bank are active members. The two agencies exchange ideas with other development partners at the group's annual meetings. UNICEF staff from 15 countries were among the participants at five regional workshops on SWAps organized by the Inter-Agency Group in the past year. The issue of UNICEF engagement in SWAps will be discussed more extensively in a report to be submitted to the Executive Board at the first regular session of 2003 (E/ICEF/2003/6).

51. With the recent developments in the World Bank, including increased commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, the review of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative, the announcement of the "LICUS" (Assistance to Low-Income Countries Under Stress) approach, the launching of the EFA Fast Track Initiative, and the increased grant portion of the thirteenth replenishment of the International Development Association, cooperation is being expanded in the areas of basic social services, social protection and post-conflict rehabilitation. There are cases of cooperation in those areas using both grant and loan schemes of the World Bank. In most cases, the Bank provided funds to programme frameworks and project interventions developed by UNICEF, with UNICEF providing technical support to the Bank's missions and sharing experience and knowledge at the field level.

II. Follow-up to international conferences

52. UNICEF worked closely with United Nations and other partners preparing for the major international conferences and summits which took place in 2002: the International Conference on Financing for Development, the World Food Summit, the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Special Session on Children. UNICEF participated in all of these events through high-level statements and as a member of roundtables and relevant panels. Additionally, UNICEF invested a major effort into the preparation, holding and follow-up to the Special Session on Children, for which it served as the substantive secretariat.

53. UNICEF is an active participant in developing the evolving framework which integrates the goals of the Millennium Declaration, the resources and support derived from the Monterrey Consensus and the overarching concern for environmental protection and sustainability emerging from the Johannesburg Commitments. Within this overall framework, the Declaration and Plan of Action of *A World Fit for Children* provide a cross-cutting set of goals and targets aimed at addressing those issues of particular relevance to the well-being of children.

A. Follow-up to the General Assembly Special Session on Children

54. The Special Session on Children was founded on a thorough end-decade review of progress for children in the 1990s, high-level regional meetings and a popular campaign, "Say Yes for Children", in which more than 95 million people participated. The Session was immediately preceded by a Children's Forum which adopted its own declaration, "A World Fit for Us". At the Special Session itself, national leaders and government representatives adopted *A World Fit for Children*, which commits leaders to completing the unfinished agenda of the 1990 World Summit for Children and to addressing emerging issues which are central to the achievement of longer-term goals, especially the Millennium Development Goals. It reaffirms the obligation of leaders to promote and protect the rights of each child, acknowledging the legal standards set by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols. The Plan of Action also reaffirms established goals and targets relevant to children endorsed by world summits and conferences, including the Millennium Summit. It adopts 21 goals in four priority areas of action: promoting healthy lives; providing quality education; protecting children from abuse, exploitation and violence; and combating HIV/AIDS.

55. The Plan of Action lays out agreed responsibilities for follow-up actions, including the development or strengthening national and, where appropriate, regional actions plans for children; and the integration of the goals into national policies, development programmes, poverty eradication strategies and other relevant instruments. This is to be done in cooperation with relevant civil society actors, as well as children, in accordance with their age and maturity, and their families. The Plan of Action also commits Governments to regularly monitor progress towards its goals and targets and to conduct periodic progress reviews at national and subnational levels, complemented by the use of regional reviews to share best practices, strengthen partnerships and accelerate progress. As the world's lead agency for children, UNICEF was requested to prepare and disseminate information on progress made in the implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action, and the Secretary-General was requested to report regularly to the General Assembly on progress made.

56. Since the Special Session, UNICEF has worked closely with Governments, United Nations agencies and other partners to facilitate the follow-up. A senior-level consultation with global NGO partners, held in July 2002, reviewed experience, methodologies and options for supporting the participation of civil society, families, young people and children in the national follow-up process, as envisaged by the Plan of Action. The consultation also reviewed and reaffirmed the close relationship between the goals of *A World Fit for Children* and the Millennium Development Goals and discussed opportunities for integration of the former into national efforts to pursue the Millennium Goals as well as into poverty reduction strategies. Opportunities were also reviewed for achieving synergy in the national monitoring of both sets of goals and between national reporting on the implementation of the Plan of Action of *A World Fit for Children* and the periodic reporting by States parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

57. Although strategies for follow-up to the Special Session and the implementation of *A World Fit for Children* will differ among countries, UNICEF offices and National Committees will promote certain common elements, based on the commitments made in both the Declaration and Plan of Action. UNICEF will provide appropriate support to national authorities in ensuring that, as envisaged in the Plan, the process of establishing or adjusting national and subnational goals and targets based on *A World Fit for Children* is broad-based and participatory. This process should include consultations with civil society, NGOs, community-based organizations, political decision makers, parliamentarians and representatives of young people and children, as well as other United Nations, multilateral and bilateral agencies.

58. This first stage of the follow-up is expected to result in wide-ranging consensus on a set of national and, where relevant, subnational goals and targets, and should also identify the priority actions to be taken by various partners to achieve these results. The goals and actions should reflect the commitments of *A World Fit for Children* and also take into account relevant observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on reports by States parties. These child-focused goals and actions are likely to correspond closely and contribute directly to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other key components of the Millennium Declaration.

59. In the second stage of the follow-up, UNICEF will support national consideration of the best options for pursuit of the agreed goals, targets and priority actions to implement the Plan of Action of *A World Fit for Children*. These options may include the development of a detailed National Plan of Action (NPA) for Children, with subnational components, and/or the clear integration of the agreed goals and actions for children within existing national planning mechanisms, such as national development plans, poverty reduction strategies, SWAps and provincial or municipal development programmes. The consideration of options should be based on practical considerations of their likely effectiveness in mobilizing investments for social development and ensuring priority actions to meet child-related goals on a sustained and participatory basis.

60. Following the initial national planning stage, UNICEF will continue to work with national partners to promote a favourable policy context for follow-up to the Special Session, including through such agreed cooperation activities as child-focused policy and budget analyses, reviews of legal and judicial systems in the

context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, research and situation analyses on children and women, and evaluation of NPAs and other planning instruments to assess their effectiveness in pursuing child-related goals. Internationally, UNICEF will continue to make the case, reflected in the Declaration and Plan of Action, that actions for children must be a priority in all development efforts, that investing in children and respecting their rights lay the foundation for poverty eradication, and that the participation of children and young people, who embody the future, is key to sustained progress.

61. UNICEF is also making significant contributions to the national implementation of *A World Fit for Children* and the Millennium Development Goals through its country programmes of cooperation, based around the priorities of the MTSP, and through the UNDAF strategic framework as a member of the United Nations country team.

62. The Plan of Action further stresses the need for regular monitoring and assessment of progress towards goals and targets, at various levels, including through the use of disaggregated data in order to understand and address disparities. UNICEF continues to support national partners in collecting and processing information on a disaggregated basis for the monitoring of child-related goals and targets. As during the second half of the 1990s, a major tool for data collection and analysis in many countries will be the MICS, in addition to routine statistics, demographic and health surveys and the census. The UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre will continue to contribute data and analysis on child rights and well-being for use in policy discussions and advocacy, including in industrialized countries and countries in transition. Where agreed, UNICEF will also assist countries in meeting the commitment of the Plan of Action to build community capacities for monitoring, assessment and planning, based on its experience in such areas as child health, nutrition and birth registration. It is also expected that community-based groups will play important roles in the monitoring of some of the non-quantified targets of *A World Fit for Children*, while civil society organizations may complement government efforts to monitor progress towards a range of targets, particularly within the priority area for protecting children against abuse, exploitation and violence.

63. UNICEF will continue as a partner in efforts by United Nations agencies and other external cooperating partners to assist the strengthening of national statistical capacities, in order to help track the full range of quantifiable goals and targets in the Plan of Action. In some countries, support for monitoring many of the targets is already provided through partnerships and coordinated inter-agency initiatives, in which UNICEF is participating, to monitor and report on the Millennium Development Goals. Within these initiatives, UNICEF has a particular responsibility to promote adequate monitoring and analysis on the situation of children and women. Direct UNICEF programme support to national and local government partners, where required, will focus especially on the monitoring of indicators relating to the priorities of the MTSP and on the disaggregated analysis of data to understand gender-based and other disparities.

64. As the follow-up to the Special Session reaches the review stage, UNICEF will assist national agencies and regional intergovernmental bodies, as necessary, in reviewing the status of children and the actions agreed to be taken in the context of NPAs and other planning frameworks. UNICEF will encourage national and regional partners to consider the involvement of such key stakeholders as parliamentarians,

civil society organizations, local government officials and young people in the review process. UNICEF will also support the use of data mapping techniques and performance gap analysis as part of these reviews. Based on the Plan of Action, UNICEF will promote and, where necessary, provide technical support to strengthen the linkage between national reviews of the implementation of the Plan of Action and the national reporting process on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF has initiated discussions with the Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding possible modifications to the guidelines for States party reports, with a view to promoting this synergy.

65. Taking into account progress to date in the follow-up to the Special Session and experience in the decade following the World Summit for Children, UNICEF believes that major advances are needed in three main areas if the commitments made at the Session are to be met and clear progress achieved for children in all countries and regions in accordance with both the goals of *A World Fit for Children* and the Millennium Development Goals. The foundation for such progress will need to be found in strategic partnerships, based on shared vision and values, which are effective for children; in a more central place of children in national policies, including development plans and poverty reduction strategies; and in the more systematic participation of families, young people and children in decision-making on issues affecting them. These elements are especially important if progress is to be sustained over the longer-term term. If this can be achieved, the goals and targets agreed at the Special Session will effectively provide stepping stones for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

66. UNICEF collaboration with partners is already prominent in the follow-up actions taken since the Special Session in various regions. Collaboration has been strengthened with the African Union, the Caribbean Community, the Economic Community of West African States, the Ibero-American Ministerial Summit, the League of Arab States, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and other regional and subregional bodies which are already promoting the development of action plans for implementing *A World Fit for Children*, monitoring the situation of children and reviewing inter-country experiences. UNICEF assistance and collaboration with these bodies is taking place at both ministerial and technical levels. UNICEF has held discussions and is working on specific issues related to the follow-up with United Nations and NGO partners, regional bodies including the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, as well as with major religious organizations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and networks of parliamentarians. An NGO/UNICEF Regional Network for Children covering 27 countries in Central and Eastern Europe was launched in June in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and will focus initially on a regional campaign to promote the commitments of the "Say Yes for Children" campaign and of *A World Fit for Children* to "leave no child behind".

67. Since the Special Session, a significant number of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, East Asia and the Pacific and other regions have already developed or initiated new NPAs, while in parts of Central and Eastern Europe and Eastern and Southern Africa, goals and targets of *A World Fit for Children* are also being built into poverty reduction strategies. A growing number of countries and regional institutions have adopted the ChildInfo/DevInfo software for use in monitoring the goals of both *A World Fit for Children* and the Millennium Declaration and as a basis for future reporting on progress. The use of participatory

approaches to obtain the views and recommendations of young people through such forums as youth parliaments and child opinion polls has also continued to expand with UNICEF support, as have alliances with media organizations and private sector networks on social responsibility. International NGO networks and their national associates are providing important complementary support in such areas as the public dissemination of the commitments of *A World Fit for Children* and facilitation of the participation of children.

B. Follow-up to the Millennium Summit

68. UNICEF continued its active follow-up to the Millennium Summit and earlier international conferences and summits. The MTSP was explicitly developed as the UNICEF contribution over the period 2002-2005 to the Millennium Summit Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, as well as the Declaration and Plan of Action of the Special Session on Children. The table below shows the consistency and close linkages between the priorities of the MTSP, the Millennium Development Goals and the major goals of *A World Fit for Children*. Six of the eight Millennium Goals address and affect the rights of children directly, and progress on the remaining two will affect children significantly. UNICEF remains convinced that achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is of central importance for children, and that progress for children is also key for the sustained realization of the goals.

69. UNICEF worked closely with other United Nations agencies and the World Bank in 2002 to develop a monitoring system for the Millennium Development Goals and selected goals from *A World Fit for Children*. It is clear that the MICS, developed by UNICEF in collaboration with Governments and other United Nations agencies in the 1990s will play a major role in monitoring the both sets of goals. Many of these are already covered by the existing core modules of the MICS, including infant, under-five and maternal mortality; child malnutrition; access to safe water and sanitation; and educational enrolments, disaggregated by gender and other variables where appropriate and possible. Some adaptation of the scope and design of the MICS will be needed in other areas, and discussions are ongoing.

70. UNICEF also chaired the UNDG Programme Group Steering Committee during 2002, and participated in the subcommittee of the group on the Millennium Development Goals. UNICEF provided the chair of the Programme Group's ad hoc subcommittee on communications, pending the appointment of full-time staff to run the Millennium Campaign. In this capacity, UNICEF helped to define the initial communication strategy for the United Nations system in relation to the Millennium Development Goals.

71. The World Summit for Sustainable Development produced two major concrete results with significant implications for the UNICEF mandate. References to the importance of environmental protection on children were included in the Political Declaration and a specific time-bound sanitation goal was contained in the Plan of Implementation. UNICEF is an active participant in the CEB process for system-wide follow-up in the context of the Millennium Development Goals and in the implementation of the Summit's five priorities (water, energy, health, education and biodiversity).

Congruence between the Millennium Agenda, *A World Fit for Children* and the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan 2002-2005

Millennium Summit Declaration and Millennium Development Goals	*Priority Areas of "A World Fit for Children" (Declaration and Plan of Action of the Special Session on Children)*	*Organizational priorities in the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan 2002-2005*
Goal 1: Poverty and hunger	Promoting healthy lives; Promoting quality education	Integrated early childhood development
Goal 2: Universal primary education	Promoting quality education	Girls' education
Goal 3: Gender equality and empowerment of women	Promoting quality education	Girls' education
Goal 4: Child mortality	Promoting healthy lives; Combating HIV/AIDS	Integrated early childhood development; Immunization "plus"; Combating HIV/AIDS
Goal 5: Maternal health	Promoting healthy lives; Combating HIV/AIDS	Integrated early childhood development; Immunization "plus"; Combating HIV/AIDS
Goal 6: HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	Combating HIV/AIDS; Promoting healthy lives	Combating HIV/AIDS; Integrated early childhood development; Immunization "plus"; Child protection
Goal 7: Environmental sustainability	Promoting healthy lives	Integrated early childhood development (water and environmental sanitation component)
Goal 8: Global partnership for development	All four major goals of "A World Fit for Children"	All five organizational priorities (increased official development assistance to basic social services)
Millennium Summit Declaration Section 6 — Protecting the Vulnerable	Protecting against abuse, exploitation and violence; Combating HIV/AIDS	Child protection; Combating HIV/AIDS

Part two
Summary of the deliberations of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on the annual report of the Executive Director of the Fund to the Economic and Social Council*

11. The Director of the Office of United Nations Affairs and External Relations introduced the report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/2003/4 (Part I)) and a note by the secretariat on recent reports prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) that were of specific relevance to UNICEF (E/ICEF/2003/5).

12. Delegations spoke favourably of the report and the work of UNICEF in support of reform and follow-up to the triennial comprehensive policy review. The secretariat took note of the views expressed by delegations with regard to the need for further improvements to the report to the Council and of other specific issues requiring greater attention. The Director also noted the importance of national ownership of country programmes and the role of the Executive Board, and that UNICEF was addressing those issues through both its country programmes and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the United Nations System Chief Executive Board for Coordination (CEB). The secretariat would report on additional areas raised by delegations on future occasions, including the substantive session of 2003 of the Council, the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNICEF, UNDP/UNFPA and WFP to be held in June 2003, and future sessions of the Board.

13. Speakers drew attention to priority areas for increased activity related to the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities, including the centrality of capacity-building, analysis of results and benefits of reforms on programme implementation, and the need to address the gender imbalance in the number of resident coordinators. The Common Country Assessment (CCA) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) received particular attention, with some delegations requesting an evaluation of lessons learned that could inform the second generation of CCAs and UNDAFs.

14. Other areas of specific interest included the coordination of humanitarian activities; cooperation in the areas of gender, education (particularly girls' education), health, HIV/AIDS, child protection, and follow-up to the special session on children and other international conferences, in the context of the Millennium Development Goals; evaluation of the impact of the reforms on UNICEF country programmes; national execution; and collaboration with other United Nations partners, the Bretton Woods institutions and regional development banks.

15. Addressing the concern raised by a number of delegations regarding the importance of independent evaluations, the secretariat noted that the triennial comprehensive policy review called for a number of independent evaluations and that UNICEF was an active participant in the process.

16. The Board took note of the report of the Executive Director and requested the secretariat to transmit it, along with a summary of its comments, to the Council for

* Excerpt from the report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on the work of its first regular session of 2003. The complete report will be issued as document E/2003/34 (Part I).

consideration at its substantive session of 2003 (Board decision 2003/1). The Board also took note of the report on the activities of JIU of relevance to UNICEF (Board decision 2003/2).

17. Under the same agenda item, the Deputy Executive Director spoke about the follow-up to international conferences, especially the special session of the General Assembly on children, and introduced a report on the subject (E/ICEF/2003/CRP.3). He stressed the commitment of UNICEF to follow up the Millennium Summit, and other recent summits, especially the International Conference on Financing for Development, the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the special session on children. The UNICEF medium-term strategic plan defined the organization's role in and contribution to achievement of the goals of the major international summits and conferences. He added that at least 12 countries had completed national plans of action for children before the special session and were updating them, while another 40 to 50 countries had follow-up efforts under way.

18. Several delegations welcomed the fact that the outcome document, "A world fit for children", allowed for a variety of approaches to following up the special session, including but not limited to, national plans of action. National Governments should take the lead in determining appropriate methods of follow-up to the special session. A number of delegations requested UNICEF to provide policy and statistical advice to developing countries as part of its support for such follow-up, while others requested UNICEF to continue to provide technical support in such areas as health, nutrition, child protection, education, and water and sanitation. Speakers stressed that growth in regular resources contributions to UNICEF was essential for the organization to continue supporting the achievement of the goals of the major international summits and conferences. The Deputy Director reiterated the importance of adequate financial resources to the achievement of the goals of "A world fit for children", and called upon all countries to ratify the two optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.